

IN THE TITLE:

Please amend the title to read "CONTINUOUS PICKLING METHOD AND CONTINUOUS PICKLING APPARATUS".

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the Specification as follows.

On line 1, after the title, please insert "--This application is a continuation of International Patent Application No. PCT/JP02/04137 filed April 25, 2002. This PCT application was not in English as published under PCT Article 21(2)--."

Please amend the Specification on page 8, lines 24 – 27 as follows:

Delete lines 24 and 25.

Figure 6 5 is an explanatory view schematically showing a conventional continuous pickling apparatus having four pickling tanks.

Add paragraph after line 27 as:

"Figure 6 is a block diagram showing the control flow of an embodiment of the present invention."

Please amend the Specification on page 23, line 5, please replace the current paragraph with the following:

In the description of the embodiment and examples, a continuous pickling apparatus of the type in which pickling solution in a pickling tank on the downstream side is made to successively overflow to an adjacent pickling tank on the upstream side was used. However, the present invention is not limited to this case, and it may

be applied in the same manner to any continuous pickling apparatus having a plurality of tanks. For example, it can be applied in the same manner to a continuous pickling apparatus of the type as shown in Figure 5 6 in which pickling solution in a pickling tank on the downstream side is successively transported to an adjacent pickling tank on the upstream side.